

What Is Claimed Is:

- 5 1. In a communication system comprising a source base station, a target base station and a mobile switching center, a method of improving hard handoff comprising:
- by the source base station, sending a request for handoff to the mobile switching center, wherein the request comprises a requested service option and a list of service options supported by a mobile station;
- 10 receiving by the source base station, a handoff command comprising a service option selected by the target base station, wherein the selected service option comprises one of the requested service option and a service option in the list of service options supported by the mobile station; and
- 15 sending, by the source base station, a handoff direction message containing the selected service option to the MS.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein the request for handoff recommends a hard handoff to one or more cells in a domain of the target base station.
- 20 3. The method of claim 1 wherein the list of service options is prioritized according to a preference of the mobile station.

4. In a communication system comprising a source base station, a target base station and a mobile switching center, a method of improving hard handoff comprising:

5 by the target base station, receiving a request for handoff wherein the request comprises a requested service option and a list of service options supported by a mobile station;

determining whether the requested service option is supported;

10 when the requested service option is not supported, selecting an alternate service option;

when the requested service option is supported, selecting the requested service option; and

15 sending, by the target base station, a handoff request acknowledge comprising the selected service option.

5. The method of claim 4 wherein the step of selecting an alternate service option comprises selecting the alternate service option based on one or more of a MS's service option capabilities, service option priorities, and resources available in the target base station.

20 6. The method of claim 4 further comprising sending a handoff request acknowledge message to the mobile switching center, wherein the message comprises the selected service option.

7. In a communication system comprising a source base station, a target base station and a mobile switching center, a method of improving hard handoff comprising:

5 receiving, by the mobile switching center, a request for handoff from the source base station, wherein the request comprises a requested service option and a list of service options supported by a mobile station; and

10 sending, by the mobile switching center, a handoff request message to the target base station, wherein the request message comprises the requested service option and the list of service options supported by the mobile station.

8. The method of claim 7 wherein the step of sending comprises:

15 removing one or more unauthorized service options from the list of service options supported by the mobile station to produce a list of mobile supported and authorized service options; and

20 sending a handoff request message to the target base station, wherein the message comprises the requested service option and the list of mobile supported and authorized service options.

9. The method of claim 7 further comprising:

receiving a handoff request acknowledge message comprising a service option selected by the target base station;

25 preparing to switch from the source base station to the target base station; and

sending a handoff command to the source base station, wherein the command comprises the service option selected by the target base station.